

# THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO YOUR MARCH MADNESS BRACKET

Do you need a simple breakdown of the bracket? Take a look at these quick tips to understand the chaos that surrounds March Madness.

## THE GAMEPLAN



"March Madness" is the nickname given to the NCAA Basketball Tournament. For Division I college and university teams, this is the highest prize they can achieve.

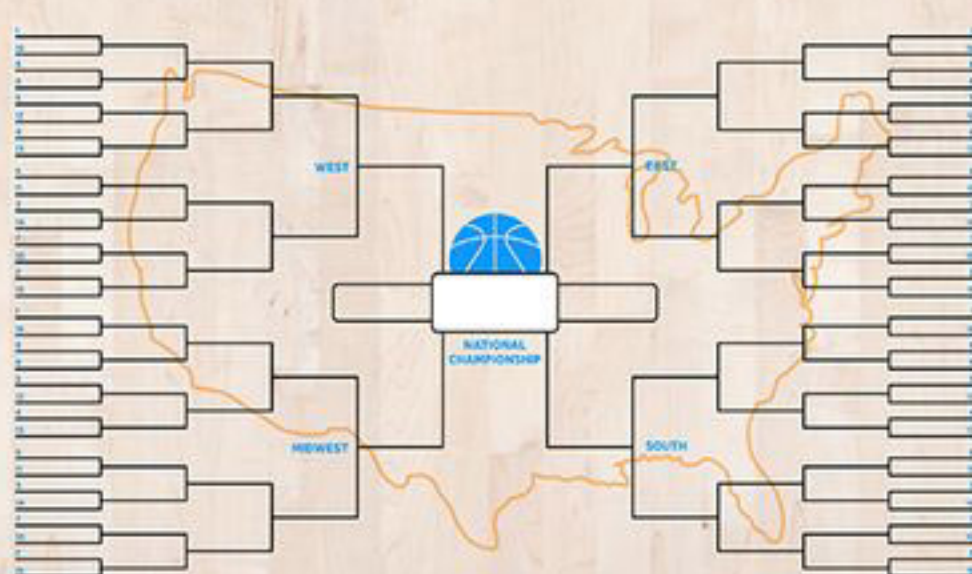
Participating in a March Madness Bracket Challenge is your chance to earn bragging rights and maybe even a little cash.

## THE LINEUP

March Madness is a single-elimination format. It's the *Hunger Games* of college ball. One loss and you're out!

Nearly 350 men's basketball teams are whittled down to 68 based on their performance through the season and by committee selection.

The decision on who will compete is announced on television during *Selection Sunday*.



Your bracket contains four regions – East, West, South and Midwest. Within each region are pods and teams given a "seed" or rank, 1-16. The best team in each region is awarded the No. 1 seed. Lower seeds 9-16 rarely make it into the Final Four of the tournament.

## THE TIPOFF

March Madness always begins with the No. 16 seed playing the No. 1 seed. The rest of the teams are matched up, and the winning team in each game advances to the next stage of the tournament.



One mistake on your bracket early on can cost you dearly as the tournament progresses.



The initial 64 teams are cut down to 32 right away. Then 32 are cut down to 16, then 8, and then the Final Four.

## TALK THE TALK

Even basketball newbies can have fun with March Madness. Skip the trash talk and brush up on the basics.



The final 8 teams.



The final 16 teams.



The final four teams – each being the champion of their respective regions.



A shot made just as the game clock buzzes, sending one team home and one on to another shot at victory.



A lower team with a seed rank of 9-16 who unexpectedly upsets a better team.

## TIPS AND TRICKS FOR A WINNING BRACKET



Although there are **over 9.2 quintillion possibilities** to create the perfect winning bracket, it's still worth a shot. In the past, Warren Buffett has offered a **1 billion dollar prize** to the person who predicts the perfect winning bracket.

To fill out a bracket, log on to [bracketchallenge.ncaa.com](http://bracketchallenge.ncaa.com) and submit your official guess. But first, check out these 5 tips for success.



### DON'T SHOW ALL YOUR LOVE TO THE NO. 1 SEEDS.

There's only been one year (2008) in which all four No. 1 seeds reached the Final Four.



### CHOOSE A FEW UPSETS.

Don't pick too many, or your bracket won't get far. Your best bet is to choose an upset from the 5 seed vs. 12 seed games.



### DON'T IGNORE HISTORY.

A No. 16 seed has never upset a No. 1 seed in the first round, ever!



### YOUR OVERALL WINNER SHOULDN'T BE LESS THAN A NO. 4 SEED.

For over the past 25 years, the national champion has been a No. 4 seed or better.



### MAKE NOTE OF CONSISTENTLY SUCCESSFUL COACHES.

Certain coaches, such as Michigan State's Tom Izzo, Duke's Mike Krzyzewski or Florida's Billy Donovan almost always lead their teams deep into the tournament on a yearly basis.



## ALTERNATE STRATEGIES

Maybe calculating the odds and comparing performance reports isn't your style. Plot your path to the Final Four with one of these strategies.



**Pick your favorite mascots** — There's no shame in going with the coolest mascots.



**Pick your favorite colors** — Yellow and Purple, or Blue and White?



**Pick teams with a personal tie** — Did your neighbor go to Florida? Good enough!